Rashi on Nehemiah
רש"י על נחמיה
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Rashi on Nehemiah

Chapter 1

Verse 1

The words of Nehemiah, etc. Nehemiah wrote this book from here on.
the twentieth year This refers to the twentieth year of King Darius, who is identical with Artaxerxes. In Tractate Rosh Hashanah (3a, b), we find that the phrase “the twentieth year” is mentioned twice using similar wording [to teach us that it is speaking of the identical year]. It states below (2:1), “And it came to pass in the month of Nissan of the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, etc.” The years were calculated from the month of Tishrei. It says here, “And it was in the month of Kislev of the twentieth year, etc.” This refers to the Kislev coming after Tishrei. Further down it says (2:1), “And it was in the month of Nissan of the twentieth year, etc.” This refers to the Nissan of the same year. And I cannot explain that they calculated their years from the month of Nissan and that the incident mentioned below: “And it was in the month of Nissan, etc.” occurred before this incident: “And it was in the month of Kislev, etc.” It is true that events [in the Torah] are not necessarily recorded in chronological order. Nevertheless, the chapters indicate that the second chapter took place only because of the events of the first chapter.

Verse 2

one of my brethren one of my companions.
and I asked them about the Jews I asked them about the Jews who had escaped the Babylonian captivity and remained in Jerusalem.
who had escaped because they were saved from the Babylonian exile.
and about Jerusalem And I asked them about the city.

Verse 3

And they said to me They answered my first question first and my latter question last; first, concerning the Jews and afterwards, concerning the wall and the gates.
who remained Those Jews who remained in the province of Jerusalem are in great trouble and reproach because the gentiles plunder and pillage them.
and the wall of Jerusalem is breached And the wall of the city is breached, and the gates are burned with fire as they were before, for Israel had not built the wall of the city or its gates, only the Temple.
were burned Heb. נִצָּתוּ, like נֻצָּתוּ.

Verse 4

for days Heb. יָמִים, many days.

Verse 5

I beseech You Heb. אָנָּא, an expression of request and supplication.

Verse 6

attentive Heb. קַשֻּׁבַת, like קוֹשֻׁבֶת, listening, for just as one says from אוֹהֵב, אָהַב, so does one say from קוֹשֵׁב, קָשַׁב and קוֹשֻׁבֶת.

Verse 7

We have dealt corruptly Heb. חָבַל, a noun, an expression of corruption, since the "heth" is vowelized with a "hataf pattah," and I cannot interpret it as a verb form, because in that case, it would have to be vowelized with a large "kamatz."
we have dealt corruptly Heb. חָבָלְנוּ, an expression of corruption, as in Daniel (6:23): "I have done no harm."

Verse 8

Verse 9

if your exile is like the matter that is stated (Deut. 30:4): "If your exile is at the end of the heavens, etc."

Verse 10

Verse 11

I beseech You, O Lord, may Your ear now be attentive At the beginning of his prayer he used this expression, and so after his prayer.
Your servant This is what he prayed for himself.
before this man before the king.
butler Heb. מַשְׁקֶה, like (Gen. 40:1): "...the butler of (מַשְׁקֵה) the king of Egypt." This is what I explained above (Ezra 2:63) according to the words of our Sages, that Hattirshatha is Nehemiah.

Chapter 2

Verse 1

of...Artaxerxes That was Darius, and because of his kingship he was called this.
wine before him They brought wine before the king in the court.
and I carried the wine And I carried the cup of wine and gave it to the king, and so is the custom, that the one who brings wine into the king's court does not carry it and give it to the king, but the chief butler receives it from the hand of the one who brings it, and carries it and gives it to the king.
And I had never been sad in his presence And I was not accustomed to being sad in his presence, to have a sad face, but to be happy and cheerful, but now I was sad with a sad face.

Verse 2

You are not ill Is it not so that you are not ill?
This is nothing This incident is only wickedness of heart, that you have in your heart to put me to death by poisoning this cup.
And I became very frightened And I became very frightened about this, lest the king accuse me falsely.

Verse 3

Why should my countenance not be sad [as translated,] why should my countenance not be sad.
when the city Jerusalem, which is the place of the graves of my forefathers, is laid waste.

Verse 4

For what do you make request What do you request of me and I shall do it for you.
And I prayed And I said before the king in my prayer, "May it be Your will, O God of the heavens, that You fulfill my petition and my request."

Verse 5

that you send me that you grant me permission to ascend to Jerusalem and build it.

Verse 6

And the king said to me At the time the king spoke to me, his wife, the queen, was sitting beside him.
and the queen Heb. וְהַשֵּׁגָל, his wife the queen, as it is stated (Dan. 5:2): "...his queen (שֵׁגְלָתֵהּ) and his concubine," for it is customary for Scripture to write "the queen," next to "the concubine"; his wives and his concubines, like (Song 6:9): "מְלָכוֹת וּפִילַגְשִׁים, queens and concubines. "
How long will your trip take When is it your intention to return?
and when will you return? When is it your intention to return?
and he sent me He gave me permission to go.
and I gave him a time I gave him a time of return.

Verse 7

may letters be given to me [Let] your scribes [give me letters] by your sanction and your knowledge, sealed with your signet to the governors of the land beyond the river, on the side of the land of Israel.
that they escort me through and escort me in peace.
until I come to Jerusalem, which is in the province of Judea.

Verse 8

And a letter to Asaph and that you send a letter to Asaph.
the guardian of the king's orchard He was appointed over the king's forests.
to make beams This is the intensive conjugation: to make ceilings and beams for the gates of the castles of the Temple Mount, for they had built the Temple as it should be built, but the gates of the walls of the Temple Mount and the wall for the court surrounding the Temple had not yet been built.

and for the wall of the city and to make beams for the wall of the city.
and for the house to which I shall go and to make a house in which I shall dwell for my needs.
and the king gave me all I asked him for.
according to the good hand according to the hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, which was good upon me, to cause me to succeed.

Verse 9

and I gave them the king’s letters in order that they escort me in peace.
officers of the army and horsemen the king sent with me [officers] in my honor, in order that I go in peace.

Verse 10

Now Sanballat etc., heard When they heard that I had come to request good for Israel and to build the walls of Jerusalem it displeased them greatly, for they were the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin.

Verse 11

and I was there for three days I was in Jerusalem for three days, and at the end of three days, I and a few men with me arose at night, and I did not tell any person what the Holy One, blessed be He, had put into my heart.

Verse 12

and there were no animals with me The few men who were with me went by foot and I alone rode on an animal. They did not ride their horses because they wanted to leave the city in secret, without anyone knowing. They went to break and cast down the walls of the city at night and to increase their breaches in order that on the morrow, the people of the city would be eager and agree unanimously with Nehemiah to build the walls of the city. So it appears from the text.

Verse 13

And I went out through the Gate of the Valley I went out through that gate at night with the men who were with me toward En Hattannin and the Dung Gate in the wall of the city; and I broke the wall, and the wall was easily cast down and broken because it had been burned with fire.
which were breached which are those places that were breached, and they breached them more.

Verse 14

And I passed to the Fountain Gate And I wished to pass to those places in the wall of the city and in those breaches, and there was no place in those breaches for riders on animals to pass through because they were so small.

Verse 15

And I ascended And I was ascending from one side at night, and I was breaking the wall with the men who were with me.
and I returned and came And when I returned, I came by way of the Gate of the Valley.

Verse 16

And the prefects who were in the city did not know where I had gone to and what I had done.
yet Heb. עַד כֵּן, until now.

Verse 17

And I said to them On the morrow I said to them.
and we shall no longer be a reproach that our adversaries should not plunder and pillage us.

Verse 18

the hand of my God who gave me favor and success before the king.
for good They intended everything for good—to build the wall of the city and its towers.

Verse 19

and they mocked When our adversaries heard the news of the building of the walls of the city, they mocked us.
are...against the king Are you rebelling against the king by building the wall of the city in order to rebel against him?

Verse 20

but you have no share What do you have in the building of the wall of this city, for you have no share in it.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

the Sheep Gate Such was the name of the gate.
they hallowed it that gate with the sanctity of the city.
its doors i.e., of the gate.
and until the Tower of the Hundred Such was the name of the tower.

Verse 2

And next to it Next to it, near the Sheep’s Gate, each builder built.
the men of Jericho built Such was their custom, these would build here [their section] of the wall of the city until [the part] they were responsible for was completed, and then others would build next to the first construction. Such was their custom, one after another, until the entire wall was built.
And next As in (Num. 2:20) “Next to him, the tribe of Manasseh”, near him, and such is its explanation, next to the construction, and Scripture was not particular in its choice of words. Sometimes it says ודי לע, and sometimes it says וילו. “And next to them he repaired.”

Verse 3

the Fish Gate Such was the name of the gate.
they laid its beams They placed the beams and ceilings on the gate.
they laid its beams Heb. קֵרוּהוּ the intensive conjugation, like “...behold he laid the beams (קָרָה),” [which appears nowhere in Scripture;] similar to (Ps. 104:3): “Who roofs (הַמְקָרֶה) His upper chambers with water.” The

“kuf” of קֻרּוּהוּ is not customarily vowelized with a “hirik” in this context because of the “resh” following it, like (ibid. 10:3): “blessed (בֻּרַךְ)”; (Prov. 17: 5): “blasphemed (חֵרֵף)”; (Gen. 17:16): “I shall bless her (וּבֵרַכְתִּיהָ)”;(Ezek. 29:12): “and I shall scatter them (וְזֵרֵתִים) in the lands.”
its locks מַנְעוּלָיו, ses verrous in French, its bolts (locks).

Verse 4

repaired Heb. חֻזַּק, [lit. strengthened,] to build the building.

Verse 5

the Tekoites They were called this because of their place, which was Tekoa.
but their mighty men the wealthy men of Tekoa.
did not bring their neck They did not assist in the service of the Holy One, blessed be He, to build the wall of the city.

Verse 6

And...the gate of the old [city] Heb. הַיְשָׁנָה, the Gate Yeshana, such was its name.

Verse 7

a throne for the governor of the land beyond the river The [people of] the land beyond the river built a throne for the governor of the land beyond the river to sit upon.

Verse 8

goldsmiths That family was called by their craft.
and they filled Jerusalem Heb. וַיַּעַזְבוּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם They filled it with earth up to the wide wall in order to strengthen it.

Verse 9

the ruler of half the district of Jerusalem He was the prince over half the people in Jerusalem. פֶּלֶךְ is an expression of a duchy or a kingdom.

Verse 10

and opposite his house his lot fell to build, for his house was near that place of the wall of the city.

Verse 11

a second measure Just like the measurement which his friend built before [him], so he also built like [his friend.] a second measure in the building of the wall. The expression of measure is inappropriate for the building of the gates because they have [a measure] only in the building of a part of the wall, for we do not find in the entire chapter of the building of the gates the expression of a measure.
the Tower of the Furnaces He also built a tower by that name. All these towers in the chapter were built in the wall around the city.

Verse 12

he and his daughters Shallum and his daughters repaired the building of the structure.

Verse 13

until the Dung Gate but the Dung Gate was not included.

Verse 14

Verse 15

the ruler of the district of Mizpah the prince and duke of Mizpah.
he built it he was building the same gate.
and roofed it And he laid the roof on it, an expression of a ceiling (מְטַלְּתָא).
and the wall of the pool of Shelah which inclines towards the king's garden.
and until the steps They recognized these places.

Verse 16

Beth Zur the name of a place.

Verse 17

half the district From that bailiwick, the half district, he built this structure. In the word לְפִלְכוֹ, the "kaff" has a "dagesh," as one says from מַלְגּוֹ, מֶלֶג, from עַבְדּוֹ, עֶבֶד, so does one say from פִּלְכוֹ, פֶּלֶג, for [if] the last letter of the noun is one of the letters "beth," "gimmel," "daleth," "kaff," "pey," or "tav," it is punctuated with a "dagesh."

Verse 18

their brothers the Levites.

Verse 19

opposite the ascent to the armory opposite the place where the mighty men would ascend to the weapons. According to the simple interpretation of the verse, it appears that there was a place near the wall where the mighty men kept their weapons, as it is stated: (II Kings 10:2) "...and cities (sic) of fortification and arms."
at the corner at the corner of the wall.

Verse 20

repaired Heb. חֻזָּרָה. Its interpretation is according to the context, and it is a double expression for repairing.

Verse 21

from the entrance of the house of Eliashib until the end of, etc.
Opposite that house he built his structure.

Verse 22

Verse 23

opposite their house which was there near the wall.

Verse 24

Verse 25

and the tower that juts out There was one tower in the wall that jutted out and protruded from within.

Verse 26

And the Nethinites dwelt in the Ophel And the Nethinites were dwelling in that district, and they were building their district, which was near the wall, until opposite the Water Gate of the eastern side.

Verse 27

Verse 28

each one opposite his house Each one was building opposite his house.

Verse 29

Verse 30

and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph Zalaph had many sons, and Hanun was the sixth.
a second measure Heb. מִדָּה שֵׁנִי, like שֵׁנִית.
his chamber Heb. וּנְשָׁכָתוֹ, like וּלְשָׁכָתוֹ. He had one chamber adjoining the wall.

Verse 31

the son of Hatzorefi the goldsmith, and he was named after his craft.

Verse 32

And between the ascent to the tower and the Sheep Gate At the beginning of the building they began to build the Sheep Gate, as it says (verse 1): "...and they built the Sheep Gate, etc." So did they build the wall all around, one after the other.

Verse 33

Verse 34

before his brethren and the army of Samaria before his brethren and the army of Samaria, who were the adversaries of Judea.
What are the Jews Why are the Jews doing this?
the feeble Heb. הָאֻמְלָלִים, a term denoting weakness and feebleness.

Will they let them Do they think that the heathens will allow them to build?
Will they sacrifice Will they constantly slaughter their sacrifices for themselves as they think?
Will they finish in one day Will they complete the work that they started in one day? That is to say that the heathens will not permit them to complete their building.
Will they revive Will they revive and repair and restore stones to their previous state to be harder and stronger than the dust?
from the heaps Heb. מֵעֲרֵמוֹת, a term denoting heaps and mounds.
for they are burnt The stones were burnt and have become dust. So did they jeer and ridicule the building of the wall, which they were building from the burnt stones that had fallen to the earth from the fire when Jerusalem was burned.

Verse 35

And Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him Tobiah was beside Sanballat.
and he said And so he was saying and ridiculing.
Even what they build even this building that they are building.
if a fox comes up on the building to breach the wall of the city, what will become of it? That is to say that the building cannot be repaired, and whoever wishes, can come and break into it.

Verse 36

Hearken, our God When I heard their ridicule of us, I prayed this prayer.
in a land of captivity that they be exiled from the land as we were exiled.

Verse 37

And do not conceal Heb. וְאַל תְּכַס, like וְאַל תְּכַסֶּה, similar to (Prov. 25:9): "...but do not divulge (תְּגַל) another's secret," like תְּגַלֶּה.
for they have provoked that they have provoked the builders to ridicule them.

Verse 38

was built Heb. וַתִּקָּשֵׁר, lit. it was bound. When the wall was bound up and built to its half, the people were eager and anxious to complete their building of it.

Chapter 4

Verse 1

was repaired Heb. עָלְתָה אֲרוּכָה, [lit. attained a cure,] that the wall was built.
repaired A [word having the] meaning of bandaging and healing.
that the people who were exposed had commenced to be closed in that the people of the city, who had heretofore been exposed without a wall, were now closed in by the building of the wall.

Verse 2

and to wreak destruction therein to wreak upon the building of the wall ruin and destruction. It is like (Isa. 32:5): "...and to speak destructively (תּוֹעָה) about the Lord."

Verse 3

over them over the builders.
because of them because of the enemies.

Verse 4

And Judea said So were the people of Judea saying and complaining.
The porter's strength has failed Those who bear and load the stones and the wood for the building of the wall have failed in their strength, for they have no more strength to build because of the enemies.
and there is much earth There is still much mud and clay to place into the wall, meaning that we still have much work, but we cannot build because of fear of the enemies.

Verse 5

And our adversaries said Nehemiah proceeds to tell this.
They will not know, and they will not see So were our adversaries saying about us: "They will not know, and the Israelites will not recognize us until we come suddenly into their midst and kill them, and with this plot we will stop and curtail the building."

Verse 6

Now it came to pass when the Jews came And now, the adversaries who had conspired together to wage war against us gathered with the Jews who were among them in their lands, and those Jews who had joined them came before the army, as is customary for soldiers to do, to speak to us, and in this manner the Jews conspired against the enemies. Now it came to pass when the Jews who dwelt beside them came, etc.
that they said to us ten times Those Jews warned us as many as ten times to wage war against our enemies because they were coming to war. And this is what they said to us, "From all the places, etc." From all those places where you will be scattered while building the wall, here and there, be careful to assemble until you return upon us together to wage war against us.

Verse 7

So I stationed from below...the wall When I heard their words, I stationed [mighty men] from below that place around Jerusalem, from behind the wall of the city and on the bare rocks.
according to families of the people, of the mighty men among them with their weapons, to fight against our enemies when they would come.
And I stationed from below, etc. and I stationed the people, etc. This verse follows the pattern of (Exod. 4:9): "...and the water that you will take from the river will be...will become blood on the dry land;" (Ps. 92:10): "For behold, Your enemies, O Lord, for behold, Your enemies shall perish;" (Jud. 5:12): "Praise! Praise! Deborah. Praise! Praise! Utter a song;" (Ps. 115:1): "Not to us, O Lord, not to us."

Verse 8

And I saw, and I arose And when I saw the enemies coming, I arose to speak to the nobles and to the prefects to spur them to fight against our enemy.
for your brethren Heb. עַל אֲחֵיכֶם, for the sake of your brethren.

Verse 9

that it had become known to us that they were coming to fight against us.
and we all returned We all returned from the place where we had gathered to meet the enemies, each one to his work in the building of the wall.

Verse 10

And it was from that day on And from that day on, half the mighty men worked at the building of the wall, and the remaining half of the mighty men were armed with weapons to guard their brethren who were doing the work.
spears Heb. וְהָרְמָחִים. The "vav" is superfluous, like the "vav" of (Gen. 36: 24): "And these are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah (וְאַיָה) and Anah."
and the rulers were close behind the entire tribe of Judah to be cautious in the battle.

Verse 11

The builders of the wall, etc. Those who were building the wall and those who were loading and carrying the loads were working with one hand, and carrying weapons with the other.
the sword Heb. חַשָּׁלַח, an implement of war, like (Job 33:18): "...from perishing by the sword (מֵעָבֹר בַּשֶּׁלַח). And so did Menahem associate it (Machbereth Menahem p. 174).

Verse 12

And the builders How were they building? They were all girded, each one with his sword on his waist, and thus did they build.
beside me He was always beside me.

Verse 13

much Heb. הַרְבֵּה, a great [amount of work].

Verse 14

will fight for us [as translated,] will fight for us.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Let each man and his youth each of the builders and a youth with him.
lodge in the midst of Jerusalem And the night was for their watch, and [during] the day they were doing work. The result was that they did not sleep at all.

Verse 17

we did not take off our clothes We were always zealous in guarding.

man took it even to the water This refers back to "not" above, like (I Sam. 2:3): "...let not arrogance come out of your mouth." None of us would take off his clothes to lie down or to wash them with water, and this is a double expression, [repeating,] we did not undress.
took it off Heb. וּפָשְׁטָה, taking off, like (Lev. 6: 4): "He shall then take off his garments," which is translated by Targum as וְיִפְשֹׁט.

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Now the cry of the people and their wives was great The poor people were crying exceedingly.
about their brothers, the Jews about their brothers, the rich Jews.

Verse 2

There were some who were saying He gives a reason for his words: Why were they crying? Some of the poor people were saying, "We are many with our sons and daughters and have to buy corn. Now we will have to sell our sons and daughters in order to buy corn in order to live." So were they crying about the rich Jews who did not wish to support them.

Verse 3

And there were some who were saying "Our fields, etc." And there were some among the poor who were complaining and saying "Our fields, vineyards and houses we shall give to others as a pledge and as security to buy corn for our food."
for the hunger since the rich do not give any of their property up to us for our support.

Verse 4

And there were some who were saying, "We have borrowed money" And there were some who were saying, "We have already borrowed money from others on our fields and our vineyards to pay the king's tax, and now we have nothing for our support."
for the king's tax Heb. לְמִדַּת, for the king's tax, like (Ezra 4:13): "...the king's due (מִנְדָּה), the head tax, and the meal tax."

Verse 5

And now, like the flesh of our brethren is our flesh And now, we are as esteemed and distinguished as our brethren who are rich.
like their children are our children Like their children, who are esteemed and distinguished, so are our children distinguished.
and behold, we are subjecting And now we have to subject and deliver our sons and daughters to others for the sake of our sustenance.
and some of our daughters are subjected And already there are some of our daughters who are subjected to others in slavery.
and we have no power We do not have the ability to redeem them.
and others have our fields and vineyards We have even delivered our fields and vineyards to others for our sustenance. From now on, what shall we eat? We have nothing with which to sustain ourselves.

Verse 6

Verse 7

And I thought this over to myself Heb. וַיִּוָּעֵץ לִבִּי עָלָי, and my heart took counsel within myself.
and I contended I contended with the nobles and the prefects, who were the rich people.
“Are you demanding each other’s loans?” Why are you doing this? You should have supported these poor people, but you are lending them money in order to appropriate their sons and daughters, their fields, vineyards and houses.
and I gathered a large assembly around them I congregated and gathered a large assembly around them to shout at them in order to embarrass them.

Verse 8

And I said to them And so I said to them: We already bought our Jewish brethren who were in captivity from the heathens to whom they were sold.
with as much as we could afford with as much money as was in our hands.
and you too And you too will sell to the heathens your brethren who are subjected to you as slaves?
and they will be sold to us And the result will be that they will be sold to us by the heathens (and if so, why should you sell them, since we will be compelled to redeem them? This is found in certain editions).
and they remained silent They were silent and ashamed, and they did not know what to answer.

Verse 9

The thing...is not good The thing is evil in the eyes of the Holy One, blessed be He.
because of the reproach because of the reproach of the heathens who are our enemies.

Verse 10

I, too, and my brothers and my servants I, too, and my colleagues lent them money, and we shall abandon and relinquish to them all these loans.
have lent Heb. נֹשִׁים, like (II Kings 4:1): “...and the creditor (וְלַנֹּשֶׁה) has come to take.”

Verse 11

give back And you shall also do as I do, to relinquish all their debts to them.
and the hundred silver pieces and the large amount of money that they owe you with the corn and the wine, etc.

Verse 12

And they said, “We shall return” And they said [that they were willing] to return and to relinquish all.
to do according to this promise that they too should relinquish.

Verse 13

I also shook out my garment Heb. נָעַרְתִּי, I also shook out my garment. נָעַרְתִּי is like (Isa. 49: 22): “...and they shall bring your sons on the skirt of their garments (בְּחֹצֶן).”

my garment is escrol(l)e in Old French, I shook out, like (ibid. 52:2): "Shake yourself (הִתְנַעֲרִי) from the dust."
So shall...shake out So shall the Holy One, blessed be He, shake out from the world and from their property those who do not relinquish their debts.
shake out and empty without property.

Verse 14

that he commanded me i.e., the king.
governor Heb. פֶּחָה, like פֶּחָה, ruler, after the pattern of רִיקָם, empty, like רֵיקָה.
from the twentieth year of King Darius, for then he ascended from Babylon, as it is stated (2:1): "Now it came to pass in the month of Nissan in the twentieth year, etc."
twelve years which equal twelve years.
my brethren and I I and my colleagues who came with me.
have not eaten the food allotted to the governor the food that was fit for the governor, which the people give the governor from the tax.

Verse 15

burdened the people Heb. הִכְבִּידוּ, lit. made heavy. They made the tax heavy upon the people.
and took They would take bread and wine from them for the tax after they had already given forty silver shekels, and they were accustomed to doing this every year.
also their servants [i.e., the servants] of the governors.

Verse 16

wall the wall of the city.
I adhered I busied myself to engage in it constantly.
and we did not buy a field But neither I nor my associates bought the fields of the Jews who were building the wall because of their poverty; they were engaged in building the wall, but I gave them money in order to build the wall.
over the work to build constantly.

Verse 17

one hundred and fifty men were eating at my table, in addition to the proselytes who came to us from the gentiles, for they too were eating at my table.

Verse 18

And what was prepared And every day they ate at my table one ox, six sheep and many birds.
prepared Heb. בְּרֻוֹת. Its interpretation is according to the context: six prepared sheep, like the matter that is stated (I Sam. 25:18): "...five prepared (עֲשׂוּיוֹת) sheep."
were prepared for me Heb. וְנֵעָשׂוּ, an expression of preparation, like (Gen. 18:8): "...and the calf that he had prepared (עָשָׂה)."
and as much as ten days' supply Heb. וּבֵין עֲשָׂרֶת יָמִים, lit. and between ten days. And every day they drank much wine, the amount that suffices for ten days.
and for this Heb. וְעִם זֶה ; and this procedure, for which I used to make such big expenditures.

food of the tax, which is fit for the governor, I did not seek, and I did not request it of the people, for the work of the building of the wall was heavy and strong upon them.

Chapter 6

Verse 1

and no breach was left therein in the wall of the city.
I had not erected that doors were not made in the gates of the city.

Verse 2

in Kefirim This is a name of a place.
[which is] in the Valley of Ono That is the name of the valley.
and they were plotting against me. I understood from them that they were plotting against me to assassinate me there.

Verse 3

"I am doing great work of the buildings (of the city); other editions read: [of the buildings] of dust.
Why should...stop Why should the work be curtailed?
when I leave it Heb. אַרְפֶּנָּ, lit. [slacken] my hand from the building.
and come down to you to speak with and to meet with you.

Verse 4

Verse 5

with his servant through his servant.
and an open letter was in his hand He sent me a written letter through him.

Verse 6

It was written in it in that letter.
It is heard among the nations that it is known to all the nations that you and all the Jews are plotting to rebel.
and Gashmu says Gashmu is Geshem the Arab, and its interpretation is like a man who says to his friend, "This is the matter, and so-and-so says."
according to these words This refers back to the text, and it is a transposed verse. It is as though it was written, "According to these words was heard among the nations, etc."

Verse 7

...also...speakers Until "...and take counsel together" was written in the letter.
speakers Heb. נְבִיאִים, speakers, like (Isa. 57:19): "I created the speech (נִיב) of the lips."
saying who say that there is a king in Judea.
and now it will be reported to the king After you have been called king, it will be reported to the king according to these words.

Verse 8

from your heart Heb. כִּי. This כִּי is in place of אֶלָּא, but.
invent them contro(u)ves eles in Old French; you are concocting them, like (I Kings 12:33): "...that he had fabricated (בָּדָה) from his heart."

Verse 9

For they all for all the nations.
fear us Heb. מְיָרְאִים. They fear us, and so they say, "Let their hands be slackened, etc."
and now, strengthen my hands to help me with the building of the wall.

Verse 10

and he was confined for he found him at home.
and he said, "Let us meet Shemaiah was a false prophet who had received a bribe from Sanballat and his colleagues to frighten Nehemiah in order to stop the work.
for they are coming to assassinate you for Sanballat and his colleagues will come to assassinate you.
and tonight they are coming Therefore, he warned him to enter the Temple and to close the doors about himself, because the doors of the gates of the city had not been made, as it says at the beginning of the chapter (verse 1): "Also that until that time, I had not erected doors in the gates."

Verse 11

Will a man like me flee This is a question: Will a man like me flee to enter the Temple?
I will not enter I will not enter there because of fear of death, and I will not transgress the commandments of the Holy One, blessed be He, that a stranger (a non-Kohen) may not enter His Temple.

Verse 12

And I discerned I discerned in his words that the Holy One, blessed be He, had not sent him on this mission, but that he wanted me to commit a transgression because of fear of death.
for he spoke prophesy concerning me for he spoke these words concerning me in the name of prophecy.
had hired him Heb. וּשְׂכָרוֹ. Each one of them had hired him and given him pay to frighten me and to curtail the building of the wall.

Verse 13

Because he was hired he told me these things.
in order that I fear in order that I fear them, to do this to enter the Temple and sin.
so that they should have this for a scandal in order that they should have this as a scandal to reproach me with this sin.

Verse 14

and also Noadiah the prophetess She and the rest of the false prophets received pay from Sanballat and his cohorts in order to frighten me with their false prophecies.

Verse 15

on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Ellul, in the twentieth year of King Darius, for in the twentieth year of Darius, Nehemiah went up from Babylon, and in that year he built the ruins of Jerusalem.
after fifty-two days The construction of the wall was completed fifty-two days after they had started building it.

Verse 16

Now it came to pass when all our enemies heard this matter, that the construction of the wall was completed.
that all the nations became frightened when all the nations saw that the construction of the wall of the city had been completed.
and they fell very low in their own eyes They themselves fell in their own eyes; they despised themselves, for the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.

Verse 17

the rulers of Judea Heb. חֹרֵי, the princes of Judea.
to Tobiah Heb. עַל-טוֹבִיָה. He was a renegade Israelite.
and Tobiah's i.e., Tobiah's letters.

Verse 18

For many in Judea Heb. רַבִּים, who were great rulers in Judea, were partners in a covenant and an oath with him.
for he was the son-in-law Tobiah [was the son-in-law] of Shechaniah.
and Jehohanan his son [the son] of Tobiah.
the daughter of Meshullam Meshullam was a great man and a ruler.

Verse 19

also of his good qualities His confederates and his kinsmen would speak of them before me.
his good qualities Heb. טוּבֹתָיו ses proezes, in Old French, his gallant exploits.
they divulged to him to tell Tobiah.
Tobiah sent letters He constantly sent letters to frighten me so that we would not build the wall.

Chapter 7

Verse 1

were appointed The Levites were now made appointees over their stations to be gatekeepers and singers in the Temple.

Verse 2

over Jerusalem to guard the gates of Jerusalem.
for a long time Heb. מֵרַבִּים, lit. from many; from many days.

Verse 3

until the sun becomes hot until midday, for the day was long.
and they shall stand until And as long as the doors are open, they shall stand; they shall not move until the doors are locked shut, and whoever

wishes to leave may leave the city, and whoever wishes to enter may come and enter. They did all this because of the enemies.
and hold them They should hold the doors to lock them.
watches among the inhabitants of Jerusalem of the inhabitants of Jerusalem station watches, jetes in Old French, (groups of) watchmen.

Verse 4

a wide place Heb. רְחָבַת יָדַיִם, a wide and large place.

Verse 5

to trace their lineage Heb. לְהִתְיַחֵשׂ, to search for their lineage.
those who went up at first of those Jews who went up with Ezra at first.
and I found written in it All these words were written in that letter.

Verse 6

These are the people of the province, etc. until (10:35): “And we cast lots for the wood sacrifice.”
and to Judea to the province of Judea.
each one to his city lit. a man to his city.

Verse 7

who came with Zerubbabel who came from the captivity of the exile with Zerubbabel.
Jeshua This is Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the High Priest. These figures sometimes coincide with the above figures (Ezra 2); sometimes there are some that do not coincide. Scripture was not so exact with the figures, but the total is the same in both places, as it is stated (Ezra 2:64, Neh. 7:66): “The entire congregation together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.” The writer relied on this total and was not so exact in the figures of the individual numbers. Everything is explained above (Ezra 2).

Chapter 8

Verse 1

Verse 2

on the first day of the seventh month That is the day of Rosh Hashanah.

Verse 3

from the light of the beginning of the day.
to the Scroll of the Law All the people inclined their ears.

Verse 4

on a wooden tower That wooden tower was made for the purpose of reading the Scroll of the Law upon it.

Verse 5

for he was above all the people Therefore, they all saw him.
and when he opened it, all the people stood And when he opened it to read, all the people stood silent.
stood Heb. עָמְדוּ, an expression of silence (they stood silent), like (Job 32:16): "...for they remained silent (עָמְדוּ) ; they no longer answered."

Verse 6

with the uplifting of their hands with the raising of their hands, meaning that they lifted their hands on high to thank the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is stated: (I Kings 8:22): "...and spread forth his hands towards heaven."

Verse 7

explained...to the people meaning that they would translate the words of the Torah to the people.
in their place meaning that they were standing on their feet.

Verse 8

and gave sense Heb. וְשׂוֹם שֶׂכֶל, and giving wisdom; וְשׂוֹם is an expression of doing.

Verse 9

The day is holy because it is the day of Rosh Hashanah.
for all the people were weeping because they did not uphold the Torah appropriately.

Verse 10

to whoever has nothing prepared to a poor man who has no food prepared for himself.

Verse 11

quieted They admonished all the people to be quiet, that they should weep no longer.
Hush Heb. הַסּוּ, an expression of silence, like (Num. 13:30): "And Caleb hushed (וַיַּהַס)."

Verse 12

Verse 13

And on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

Verse 14

Verse 15

And that they should announce And they commanded that they announce that they celebrate the Festival of Sukkoth, and so it is customary for Scripture to speak in this manner, like (I Sam. 9: 27): "Tell the servant and he will go ahead of us."

myrtle leaves It is explained in Tractate Succah (12a) that this is a wild myrtle which is unfit for the lulav and only fit to make a sukkah.
date palm leaves for a lulav.
and leaves of plaited trees This is the myrtle that is fit for the lulav as is explained in Tractate Succah (ad loc.).

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

day by day every day.

Chapter 9

Verse 1

and [with] earth upon them They had put earth on their heads.

Verse 2

from all the foreigners and from their wives of the heathen nations, as is stated above (Ezra 10).

Verse 3

Verse 4

on the step of the Levites There were steps upon which the Levites would stand when they would recite their song [for the sacrificial service].

Verse 5

from everlasting to ever lasting From the beginning of the world until its end, He shall be blessed.
and they shall bless Your glorious Name Now the Levites spoke toward the Shechinah in prayer, for He is great and exalted over every blessing and praise, for all the blessings and praises are His. Another explanation is that He is exalted above every blessing and praise; that no creature can bless Him or praise Him according to His greatness and His exaltedness, for He is exalted and raised higher than the mouth can express.

Verse 6

Verse 7

and made Heb. חָטְאוּ. The accent is on the first syllable on the “sin,” because its meaning is in the past tense.

Verse 8

and You made Heb. וְכָרוֹת, lit. and cutting, an expression of doing.

Verse 9

Verse 10

that they dealt wickedly Heb. הֵזִידוּ, that they dealt wickedly, like (Exod. 18:11): "...that they plotted (זָדוּ) against them."
a name Heb. שֵׁם, renom in French, renown.

Verse 11

Verse 12

by day every day.

Verse 13

and spoke Heb. וְדַבֵּר, like וּלְדַבֵּר, and to speak, as it says (Deut. 4:36): "From the heavens He let you hear His voice to chastise you."

Verse 14

Verse 15

for their hunger Heb. לִרְעָבָם. From רָעָב one says לִרְעָבָם, as from צָמָא [one says] לִצְמָאָם.
that You raised Your hand with an oath, like (Exod. 6:8): "...which I raised My hand to give it."

Verse 16

Verse 17

because of their rebelliousness Heb. בְּמִרְיָם.

Verse 18

Verse 19

on the way Heb. בְּהַדֶּרֶךְ, like בַּדֶּרֶךְ.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

into a corner Heb. לְפֵאָה, like "to be to the side of one corner," separate, not mingling with the nations of the lands.

Verse 23

Verse 24

and You vanquished [as translated,] and You vanquished.

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

And You from the heavens You heard you listened.

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

But You extended upon them You extended mercy upon them not to destroy them.

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

with all that has come upon us with the entire episode of the harsh tortures that have come upon us.

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Behold, today we are slaves upon it [the land], for we pay tribute to all the nations.

Verse 37

And its produce [the produce] of the land of Israel.
it lavishes delicacies to the kings of the nations...
whom You have appointed over us who rule over us.

Chapter 10

Verse 1

Yet, despite all this Despite all the evil that has come upon us, we are making a trust with the Holy One, blessed be He, to believe and to trust in Him.
and writing And we are writing on a scroll to accept His kingdom upon us in order that it be to us as a testimony.
and signed thereon for most of the great and prominent men among us have signed the scroll of the acceptance of the commandments, to be for us as a testimony.

Verse 2

And signed thereon He now proceeds to enumerate the signatories on the testimonial document of the acceptance of the commandments.
Nehemiah Hattirshatha It is one name, and this is what I explained (Ezra 2:63) that [the name] Hattirshatha refers to Nehemiah. And why was he called Hattirshatha? Because the Sages permitted him to drink wine of gentiles, because he was the butler of the king.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

and all who separated themselves These are the proselytes who separated themselves from the practice of the nations to cling and attach themselves to the Law of the Holy One, blessed be He, and to keep His commandments.

Verse 30

with their brethen Heb. עַל אֲחֵיהֶם with their brothers.
their noblemen the great ones among them.

Verse 31

Verse 32

and all grains Heb. שֶׁבֶר, grain, like (Gen. 47:14): "... for the grain (בַּשֶּׁבֶר) that they were purchasing."
or on holy days This refers to festivals.
and we shall abandon during the seventh year As is stated (Exod. 23:11): "But throughout the seventh year you shall let it go and abandon it (וּנְטַשְׁתָּה)."
and the loan given by every hand This refers to the release of loans during the seventh year.

Verse 33

Verse 34

and all the work of the Temple of our God to do with money.

Verse 35

we cast how much each one should bring.
the wood offering an offering of wood for the arrangement on the altar.

to the House of our forefathers which is the House of the sanctity of our forefathers.

Verse 36

the first fruits of our soil The first of every fruit of a tree. They are required by rabbinical injunction.

Verse 37

Verse 38

we shall bring to the priests to the chambers for they were usually there.
who receive tithes in all the cities of our work who take their tithes in all the cities of Israel.

Verse 39

at the [Levites’] tithing Heb. בְּעִשֵּׂר ;an expression meaning at the tithing.
the tithe of the tithe for the Levites would take a tithe from the tithe and bring it up to the priests, who did not leave the Temple.

Chapter 11

Verse 1

one of ten of Israel, so that they should dwell in Jerusalem to guard the city.
and nine parts nine parts of Israel.

Verse 2

who volunteered whose spirit inspired them to volunteer to dwell in Jerusalem to guard the city from enemies.

Verse 3

And these are the heads of the province who dwelt in Jerusalem these are the ones regarding whom it is stated below: “And in Jerusalem there dwelt of the children of Judah, etc.”

Verse 4

of the children of Judah: Athaiah, etc. He returns to explain who those ‘of the children of Judah’ were, and the entire chapter enumerates only the great and esteemed ones among them.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

the official the one appointed.
the second in command after [the official].

Verse 10

Verse 11

the official [as translated,] the official.
the official over the Temple of God appointed over the Temple of God.

Verse 12

And their brethren who performed the work of the Temple and their colleagues, who were performing the service of the Temple and its sacrifices.

Verse 13

rulers over the fathers' houses the heads of the fathers' houses of the priestly families.

Verse 14

and the official over them the one appointed over them.

Verse 15

Verse 16

over the outside work of the Temple, such as the buildings of the repair of the Temple (sic) and the wood of the arrangement, which they would bring from outside.

Verse 17

the head to begin the thanksgiving in prayer He was the head and the appointed official, and the greatest one who was first to start and to thank in prayer and in singing the songs of the Levites. יְהוּדָה is like יוּדָה, and the "hey" enters the word unnecessarily, like יוֹסֵף and יְהוֹסֵף.

Verse 18

Verse 19

And the gatekeepers those appointed over the gates of the Temple.

Verse 20

each one in his inheritance They were dwelling each one in his inheritance.

Verse 21

in the Ophel a place that was in Jerusalem.
over the Nethinites appointed over the Nethinites.

Verse 22

And the official over the Levites appointed over the Levites in Jerusalem.
over the work of the Temple of God He was appointed over the work of the Temple, such as the buildings of the repair of the Temple and the rest of the matters for which money is spent for the work of the Temple, like the matter that is stated above (verse 16): "...and Shabbethai and Jazabad over the outside work, etc."

Verse 23

For the command of the king was upon them and [his] trust The king trusted them.
upon the singers to spend money from King Darius's treasury.
for the daily requirements in order to perform the requirements of the Temple.

Verse 24

at the king's hand He was privy to King Darius's counsel.
for every matter for every matter that concerned the people, to speak to the king on their behalf.

Verse 25

Verse 26

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

there were divisions to Judah and to Benjamin They were divided into their divisions here and there in the land of Judah and Benjamin.

Chapter 12

Verse 1

and Jeshua That is Joshua the High Priest.

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

in the days of Jeshua i.e., those who were leaders in the days of Joshua the High Priest.

Verse 8

huyedoth [This was] a type of musical instrument which accompanied the songs.

Verse 9

in the watches as we find (in I Chronicles from ch. 24 on) that the Levites were divided into twenty- four watches.

Verse 10

Now Jeshua begot Joiakim, etc. All those [listed] in this verse were high priests.

Verse 11

Verse 12

And in the days of Joiakim who was the high priest. These priests were the leaders of the fathers' houses of their watches.
of Seraiah was Meraiah Of the watch of Seraiah, the head of the father's house was Meraiah, and of the watch of Jeremiah, the head of the father's house was Hananiah, and so it is with them all, and the reason Scripture did not list all twenty-four watches is that it is not exacting in enumerating them all.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

The Levites in the days of Eliashib These Levites were the heads of the fathers’ houses in the watches of the Levites in the days of Eliashib the High Priest, and the priests enumerated immediately above were the heads of the fathers’ houses in their watches, also in the days of Eliashib.
in the reign of This matter came about in the days of Darius.

Verse 23

even until the days of Johanan All those who were the heads of the fathers’ houses of the Levites until the days of Johanan the High Priest were enumerated in the chronicles.

Verse 24

a watch opposite a watch for they were divided into their watches to recite the song.

Verse 25

sentries of the gates [in their] watch The sentries of the gates were in their watch to guard the gates of the Temple.
at the thresholds Heb. בַּאַסְפֵּי, like בְּסִפֵּי הַשְּׁעָרִים, at the thresholds of the gates.

Verse 26

These were in the days of Joiakim These were the gate sentries in the days of Joiakim.

Verse 27

And in the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem at the completion of the wall of the city, to sanctify the city.
and with thanksgivings Heb. וּבְתוֹדוֹת, and with thanksgivings.

Verse 28

and from the plain the singers came from [the plain] surrounding Jerusalem.

Verse 29

Verse 30

purified themselves First they purified themselves, and afterwards they purified the others.
and the gates and the wall that there should be no uncleanliness in the city.

Verse 31

upon the wall meaning that he sanctified the city, the princes, the tribunal, and the Levites with two thanksgiving offerings around the city, as is delineated in Tractate Shebuoth (14a, 15a, b), in order to sanctify the city.
two...thanksgiving offerings two breads of the thanksgiving offerings, each bread being called a thanksgiving offering.
with processions to the right And when they went out of the city in order to encompass it, they went to the right side.

Verse 32

Verse 33

Verse 34

Judah and Benjamin They were two princes.

Verse 35

Verse 36

And his brethren the colleagues of Zechariah the priest.

Verse 37

And by the Fountain Gate Before the Fountain Gate, they marched around the city.
and opposite them And before them they ascended from the Fountain Gate to the steps of the City of David, and those steps led to the wall.

Verse 38

And the second thanksgiving offering, which went opposite [it] The other thanksgiving offering, which was second to its fellow, went opposite its fellow, alongside it, not one following the other.
and I was after it And I marched after it, [i.e.,] after the thanksgiving offering.

Verse 39

and they stood They stood, there and did not go any further.

Verse 40

the two thanksgiving offerings that they carried to the Temple.

Verse 41

with the trumpets They sounded the trumpets out of their joy.

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

were appointed Heb. וַיִּפָּקְדוּ, a word meaning appointment.
the chambers Heb. הַנִּשְׁכוֹת, like הַלִּשְׁכוֹת, the chambers of the Temple.
to gather in them And in these chambers they would place all the gifts of the priests and the Levites, and from there they would distribute [them] among them.
portions Heb. מְנָאוֹת like מָנוֹת.
for the priests and for the Levites The priests were taking what was due them and the Levites what was due them.
who stood and ministered there before the Holy One, blessed be He, with thanksgiving offerings and thanksgivings.

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

the portions Heb. מְנָיוֹת, like מָנוֹת.
and they consecrated [them] for the Levites And they would give the tithe to the Levites, who would take the tithe from the tithe and give it to the priests.

Chapter 13

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

all mixtures Every mixture of heathens, like (Exodus 12:38): "A great mixed multitude (עֵרֶב רַב) also went up with them."

Verse 4

Now prior to this Heb. וְלִפְנֵי מִזֶּה, before this.
was a kinsman of Tobiah Eliashib the priest was a kinsman of Tobiah the companion of Sanballat, and the priest placed Tobiah's vessels there.

Verse 5

And he made Eliashib [made].
in previous times Before I came to Jerusalem, they would put [them] there.

which were ordained for the Levites the gifts due the Levites.

Verse 6

Now with all this during this entire episode. I came to the king when I returned to Babylon.
I requested of the king to give me permission to go up and to return to Jerusalem.

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

And I commanded I commanded to purify it, and they purified the chambers, etc.

Verse 10

portions Heb. מְנָיוֹת, [like] מָנוֹת.
had not been given that the Israelites had not placed the gifts there, and because of that they fled and wandered here and there to ask for their gifts, and were not occupied as much with their service.

Verse 11

And I gathered them I gathered the priests and the Levites to station them on their watches in their service, and all of Israel brought them their gifts there.

Verse 12

Verse 13

for they were deemed trustworthy to distribute the gifts among them [the Levites].

Verse 14

Verse 15

the stacks sheaves of grain.
and I warned I warned them not to do it.
on the day they sold provisions On the day they were selling food and provisions. דֵּי, provisions, as (Gen. 45:21): "...and he gave them provision (צֵדָה) for the way."

Verse 16

and the Tyrian Merchants of Tyre would bring fish to sell.

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Now it came to pass when the gates of Jerusalem cast shadows When the shadows of the Sabbath eve fell on the gates, I ordered the doors of the city to be closed and not re-opened until after the Sabbath so that the traffickers would not enter the city to sell their merchandise and cause Israel to profane the Sabbath.

Verse 20

So...lodged The traffickers and the merchants lodged outside Jerusalem on the Sabbath once and twice so that the Children of Israel would open the gates and buy from them on the Sabbath.

Verse 21

and I said to them I warned those traffickers.
If you repeat this if you continue to do this a second time.
Since that time From that day on, they did not come on the Sabbath day.

Verse 22

Verse 23

who had married who had married heathen wives.

Verse 24

And half...were speaking Many of their children spoke the Ashdodite language like their mothers.

Verse 25

and I struck I gave them lashes in order to chastise them and remind them.

Verse 26

caused him even to sin If he sinned, how much more so is it certain that you will sin through your heathen wives! As is written in the next verse, “Shall we hearken, etc.?” i.e., Solomon was found sinning through his heathen wives, and you have married foreign wives in order to sin?

Verse 27

Verse 28

And [one] of the sons of Joiada...was the son in law of Sanballat One of the sons of Joiada was the son-in-law of Sanballat, the adversary of the Jews; thus, I drove him away from me so that he should not frequent Jerusalem because of his son-in-law, to see the city and the ways to enter and leave it.

Verse 29

Remember them the good that they did.

Verse 30

Verse 31

at appointed times They would cut wood for the altar pyre at appointed times.
and concerning the first fruits that they should bring the first fruits at a certain time; for each species I appointed its time.